Oklahoma Chess Monthly

APRIL 2017

Chess News and Chess History for Oklahoma

Saint Louis

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Spectating in St. Louis

How and Why to Visit the St. Louis Chess Club Events

by Tom Braunlich

Twice a year an unparalleled chess opportunity awaits the players in this region just a relatively short drive away in St. Louis: a spectator-friendly, exciting, and inspirational visit to the U.S. Championship or the Sinquefield Cup at the beautiful St. Louis Chess Club and Scholastics Center.

I've made this pilgrimage several times and have learned the best and least expensive approach, where to stay, and what to see and do on your holiday to one of the best chess destinations in the world. This article shows what is available, gives the basic facts, and presents specific recommendations for how and why to do it, and includes photo examples.

The Destination:

The St. Louis Chess Club is in a beautifully renovated building in the heart of the trendy and pleasant "Central West End" part of the city. Next door to the club is the Kingside Diner

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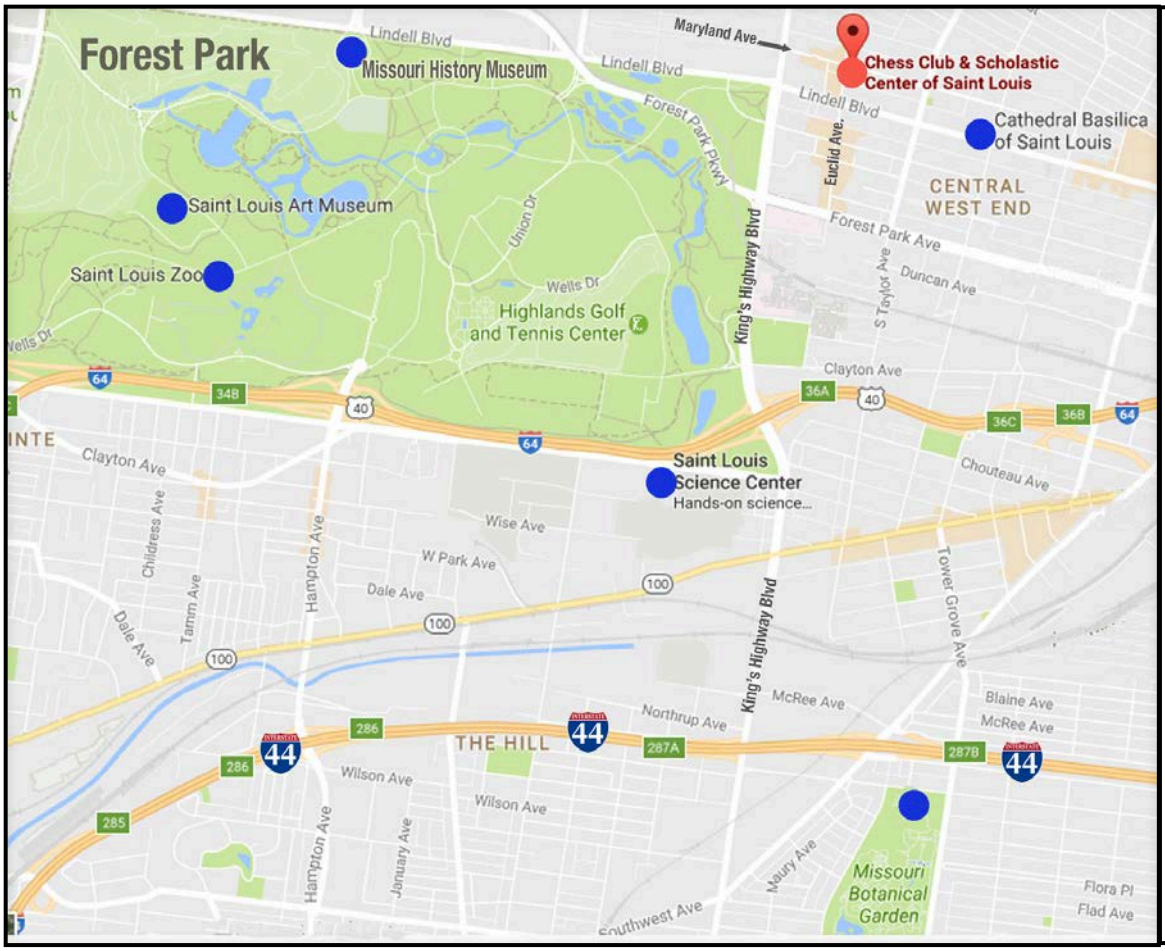


Map of the St. Louis "Chess Area"

The Chess Club location is marked in Red.

Blue dots indicate the location of other attractions discussed in the article.

Note Interstate 44 coming up from Oklahoma runs just to the south of this area, making for easy access.

where the players hang out, and across the street is the fantastic World Chess Hall of Fame (see below). Just a block to the west is Forest Park, the huge and famous location of the 1904 World's Fair, now home to many excellent attractions. (See map).

The Chess:

Throughout each year several major tournaments are held at the club. They are designed for spectators.

- The U.S. Championship and U.S. Women's Championship (this year March 28-April 11), featuring the best players in the country like Caruana, Nakamura, So, Shankland, Kamsky, Xiong, etc. and on the women's side Krush, Pakidze, Zatonskih, etc. http://uschesschamps.com/2017-us-championship/overview
- The Sinquefield Cup international tournament (this year it is July 31 – Aug 12), featuring many of the Top 10 players in the world including Carlsen, Anand, Topalov, Kramnik, Caruana, So, Nakamura, etc.
- Special matches are also often arranged. This year there will be the "Match of the Millennials" July 26-29, featuring eight of the top young prodigies in the world under age 17.
- The U.S. Junior Championship (held mid-summer), and other tournaments.

Spectator Friendly:

Each of these events is designed to be a chess nerd's paradise! Not only can you watch the players in action from just a few feet away, or watch with other fans down in the lobby the great online TV-quality coverage of the event (featuring Seirawan, Ashley, and Shahade), but there are also Commentary Rooms where you can go and listen to other grandmasters discussing the games in progress, and where you can ask questions of them – all the while enjoying free beverages and snacks!

Scene from 2016 Sinquefield Cup. Players from Right to Left are: Grischuk, So, Giri, Nakamura, Topalov, Carlsen, Vachier-Lagrave, Anand.

(Above) Nakamura discussing his game with the audience. (Below) GMs Robert Hess (left) and Patrick Wolff commenting on the games live. (Photos by TB)

Commentary Rooms:

They usually have at least one, and sometimes two commentary rooms, each staffed by two GMs, and often with several other guest GMs. For example, typically GMs Ramirez and Finegold are at the Kingside Diner side room, and across the street in the hall of fame are Akobian and Chandler. Often visiting grandmasters come in to comment on the games too. I've seen for example Patrick Wolff there, who was U.S. Champion twice back in the 1990s but retired to go to Wall Street.

Frequently the players themselves come in to discuss their own just-completed games and answer questions from the audience too! I've been able to ask questions to such players as Nakamura, Svidler, MVL, and Topalov!

Why Spectate Here?

Prior to the establishment of the St. Louis facility by Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield in 2009, seeing top GMs in action was a rare sight outside of Europe. When I was a young player in Oklahoma in the mid-1970s, I never even laid eyes on a grandmaster until I went to the U.S. Open in Virginia after three years of playing tournament chess. Having them practically in our backyard like this is a privilege that may not always be here, and no true chess player should miss it!

It is fun; and for many players I believe spending a day or two spectating at one of these events will be inspirational and educational. Just seeing for yourself how the players concentrate so deeply at the board — soaking up all these grandmaster vibes — is probably alone worth about 50 rating points!

Note the fierce concentration. GM Sam Shankland (left) playing GM Wesley So at the 2016 U.S. Championship.

Images from Past Events in St. Louis

Photos by TB

CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CENTER of Saint Louis

Spectator Rules:

For the big events, to make sure only serious spectators attend they charge a nominal $10 fee per round, which allows you to view the games in person and use the commentary rooms and partake in the free refreshments, etc. You don't need a reservation to do it — when you arrive just check in at the club's front desk. Some other rules:

- No cell phones or other such devices are allowed in the tournament room. You must "check" those devices at the desk, and security guards enforce this rule.
- Cameras are allowed. You may take photos during play — as long as your camera is quiet and you don't use a flash.
- Of course, no talking in the tourney room.
- Rounds start at 1:00pm.

How to Get There:

Getting there is easy. From Oklahoma, simply get on I-44 and drive all the way to St. Louis.

From Tulsa this trip is 5 ½ hours. From OKC about 7 hours. Adjust your drive time estimate accordingly for your location.

I-44 takes you within a couple miles of the club. (See Map) You can see I-44 running along the southern edge of this map. Take the King's Highway exit and head north. You will pass the park on your left and the big hospital on your right. Just beyond the Chase Park Plaza Hotel you turn right on Maryland Avenue and go one block to Euclid Avenue, and the chess club is right there nestled into a lovely neighborhood of old homes, tall condos, restaurants and shops.

The Sinquefield Cup

There is some parking in the lot beside the club, and there is street parking for free on Maryland Avenue off to the east. (You may have to park a few blocks away).

But it is better to park at the hotel if you are staying overnight (see below).

My Recommendation: the Weekend Plan

From Oklahoma (or Kansas or Arkansas too), the St. Louis destination allows for a great two-day mini-holiday, with just one overnight stay, including not only chess during the afternoons but time for visiting one or two other major attractions.

The Weekend Plan is easy as it takes advantage of an inexpensive new hotel just a block south of the club. You won't have to worry about parking, and many other attractions are within walking distance.

The Weekend Plan is simple:

- Make reservations in advance at the *Holiday Inn Express St. Louis Central West End*. It is just one block south of the Chess Club. If you have AAA or other discounts it will be about $95 a night, about as good as you can find in St. Louis. http://www.hiexstlouiswest.com It is nice, and has secure underground parking.
- Saturday morning, get up early and drive to St. Louis timed to arrive by noon.
- Check in at the hotel, get your car parked, and walk a block north to the chess club.
- Check in at the club desk by 1:00pm and see the players begin the round, etc.
- Saturday afternoon spectate, hang out in the club, watch in the commentary rooms, play skittles on the sidewalk, etc.
- Saturday evening is free to do whatever you want. There are many restaurants within walking distance, a movie theater a block west, and a Whole Foods Market a block south of the hotel. Of course, there are likely to be many events going on in St. Louis on a Saturday night. One time I saw a production of Shakespeare's *Richard II* performed in the park.
- Sunday morning is the time to visit one of the many great attractions nearby.
    - In Forest Park there is
        - **St. Louis Zoo** (great family zoo)

    - St. Louis Art Museum (fantastic)
    - **Missouri Museum of History** (noice)
    - St. Louis Science Center (?)
    - Forest Park itself has some great walking trails, golf, etc.
  - **St. Louis Botanical Gardens** is a short drive south and is really fantastic.
  - The St. Louis Cathedral is awesome. Just two blocks east of the hotel.
  - The World Chess Hall of Fame is the star attraction of them all, (see below)
- Sunday afternoon at 1:00pm return to spectate again at another round of chess.
- Sunday evening drive back home.
- You just had yourself a great time in St. Louis!

Of course, on a weekend it might be a little crowded at the club, but actually it isn't ever too bad. It is not crowded at all on weekdays so that is an even better time to go.

World Chess Hall of Fame and Museum

Across the street from the club, behind a gigantic 15-foot-tall wooden chess king (claimed to be the biggest in the world) is the World Chess Hall of Fame and Museum. It is a very professionally run museum that always has several special temporary exhibits related to chess that are always wonderful. It is worth a trip to St. Louis just by itself. Check out their website for the list of upcoming exhibits. www.worldchesshof.org They have some permanent exhibits too, including a wall showing bios of all the people who've been inducted into the Hall.

It also has an excellent chess gift shop!

Emily Allred, one of the curators, showing the terrific museum.

Conclusion:

I highly recommend a visit to spectate at one of these great St. Louis events. I'd go so far as to say it is a "must do" for any serious chess player. Kids will be inspired; adults will have fun (or maybe vice versa). There are so many masters hanging around the club during these events that you can't drop a bishop without it landing on a 2300-player. The chess is fun, and the surrounding attractions are excellent. The weekend plan is easy and inexpensive for many people in our area. If you live in southern Oklahoma or North Texas, and face a long drive, you might of course fly or take an extra day for the car trip (to avoid having to leave too early in the morning). But the weekend plan is an example of how easy the visit can be.

Let me know if you go… I'd like to see some of your best pictures from the trip, and hear your favorite stories… Maybe we can share them in a future issue of OCM!

Another Pride and Sorrow of Chess

by Istvan Szabad

This is the tragic true story of a chess grandmaster from long ago who became a prodigy as a young man in New Orleans, had a meteoric rise to the top of U.S. chess, and then, following a celebrated and triumphant chess tour of Europe with spectacular wins against the top champions, returned home to mysteriously give up the game. He lived out the rest of his life in obscurity, leaving behind speculation of what might have been and romantic legends about his disappearance.

But his name was NOT Paul Morphy.

His name? Hint: 1. d4, Nf6 2. Nf3, e6 3. Bg5.

The Torre Attack, named after Carlos Torre Repetto, born in Mexico, raised in New Orleans.

Carlos Torre Repetto

David Lawson's book about the tragic life of Paul Morphy, *The Pride and Sorrow of Chess*, covered Morphy's historic three-year long chess career. It was recently republished in 2010. But perhaps it needs a sequel to cover another pride and sorrow — Torre — whose life was also staggeringly sad and equally enigmatic in its end.

A leading Mexican chess player and author, Professor Febronio E. Chavarria, was traveling in Villagran, Tamaulipas (Mexico), in 1933.

"It all happened by chance. My brother and I had stopped off there because we were on our way to hunt deer when our car broke down. My brother went for some tools and while I was waiting in the main square, I noticed a person playing chess on his own. I walked up to him, introduced myself and asked for a game. 'Don't play on your own, it is much better give me a game,' I said to him. He beat me 3 times in a row, in less than an hour. Then I told him that my rivals in Monterrey and Mexico City would 'sweat blood' to beat me, 'but you don't just beat me, you give me a right spanking.' He replied: 'Well, I've played in international tournaments.' 'What's your name?' I asked him. 'I am Carlos Torre Repetto.' I said that, if I'd known who he was, I wouldn't have asked for a game; I would have asked him for lessons! He just smiled..."

Carlos Torre Repetto was born in 1904, in Merida, Yucatan province, Mexico. He is called Torre because, in the Spanish fashion, his full name lists his surname, Torre, followed by his mother's name, Repetto, but it is correct to use just Torre when referring to him. He was the sixth of seven siblings (four boys and three girls). According to Torre, he learned the moves of the pieces at age six by observing the games between his father and his older brother, just as Morphy

TOP 25

For APRIL 2017

Top 25 Active Oklahoma Players				
	Player	This Month	Change +/-	
1	Advait Patel	2477	0	
2	Daniel Ng	2273	1	
3	Howard Zhong	2248	0	
4	Mark Hulsey	2221	0	
5	Tom Braunlich	2201	0	
6	Tom Amburn	2200	0	
7	Chibuzo C Ilonze	2178	0	
8	Sergey Galant	2178	0	
9	David Zelnick	2146	0	
10	Joshua Alexander	2142	0	
11	Anthony Paolercio	2130	0	
12	Jamal I. El Chamieh	2124	0	
13	John Cope	2089	0	
14	Ryan Farell	2089	0	
15	Chuck Johnson	2087	0	
16	Michael Nugent	2087	0	
17	Tom Patton	2080	0	
18	Matt Dalthorp	2074	12	▲
19	James Tyner	2074	0	▼
20	Joe Dean Veal	2071	0	▼
21	David Luscomb	2068	0	▼
22	Charles D Unruh	2062	0	
23	Veronika Zilajeva	2057	0	
24	Alan Islas	2024	0	
25	Charles M Unruh	2001	0	▲

Player of the Month

MATT DALTHORP

One of the leaders of the OU club, Dalthorp has been on a roll lately and his rating has risen to 2074. See the report on the Arkansas Open, page ___

and the great Capablanca did. When Carlos was not yet eleven, the Torre family moved to the United States to flee political strife in Mexico.

They settled in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, birthplace of the legendary Paul Morphy. The reason for choosing this particular city was perhaps merely geographical, as the distance between Merida and New Orleans is relatively short, even less than that separating Merida from Mexico City. Of course, in those days it was relatively easy for a Mexican to enter the United States and settle there for indefinite periods.

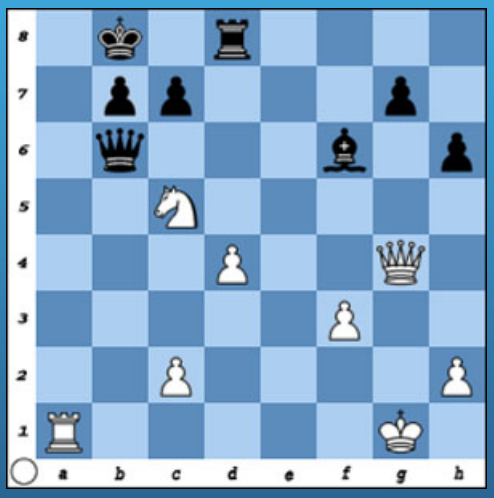
Within a few months of his arrival in New Orleans, Carlos quickly learned to read and write English, and he began to frequent that city's chess circles. At age thirteen his chess talent became apparent to Edward Z. Adams, a chess organizer well known in the United States. Adams, who served as vice president of the New Orleans Chess, Checker and Whist Club, gladly took on the role of guide and mentor to the talented youth.

Young Carlos Torre, in New Orleans (seated left)

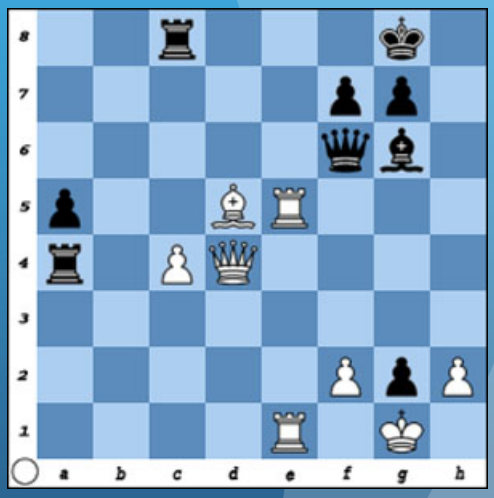
Thanks to Adams' patronage, within a year

PUZZLES

Answers Next Page



White to move and win. (Easy)



White to move and win. (Difficult)

Torre was already the second strongest player in New Orleans (after a judge called Leon Labatt). Adams' club was thrilled to have a prodigy on its hands. On March 20, 1920, it organized a simultaneous display where, in front of 200 excited spectators, the fifteen-year-old Torre took less than three hours to defeat eight out of the ten players. He drew the other two. Afterwards, The Good Companion magazine published an article about him titled “A new Paul Morphy.”

In 1922, the German-American master Edward Lasker (not to be confused with the world champion Emanuel Lasker) was visiting New Orleans. He agreed to play an exhibition game with Torre, who was not yet eighteen. It lasted three hours and ended in draw after 43 moves. This was a remarkable result, given that Lasker was at the height of his powers at the time and, within a few months, would be contesting a match for the U.S. Championship title with Frank Marshall.

Then Torre played in Detroit in the 1924 Western Chess Association Championship, which in those days was the de facto U.S. Championship tournament. At only 19 years old, Torre won the tournament resoundingly—2.5 points ahead of his nearest rival! Reshevsky could finish only fifth. Torre's victory confirmed him as America's third-strongest player, after Capablanca (then the world champion, who was from Cuba but lived in New York) and Marshall. Torre met Capa at the Manhattan Chess Club on September 24, 1924. The two men shook hands and exchanged a few words in Spanish. On December 28 an exhibition game was organized in New York between Torre and David Janowski, who had contested the world crown against Emanuel Lasker in 1910. Torre, playing black, emerged victorious in a hard-fought contest that lasted 62 moves.

In November 1924, *The American Chess Bulletin* published a letter from Emanuel Lasker himself in which he described Torre as a "promising" talent. C.S. Howell wrote an article entitled "A New Champion," in which he said America should be as proud of Torre as they were of Capablanca. The young man,

Answers to the Puzzles

(1) The surprising 1. Qc8+ wins. If Black takes with the rook, it allows 2. Nd7 with smothered mate. If Black takes with the king, the response is 2. Ra8 and a back rank mate.

(2) English GM Luke McShane here wins this recent game with four swift hammer blows. Note that if the immediate 1. Re8+, Rxe8 2. Rxe8+, Kh7 White could win if his queen could check safely on the h-file, but black's Q covers the h4 square. So, 1. Qg4! "forks" the R on c8 and the square h3. 1…Rf8 (forced. If 1…Ra8 then 2. Re8+ soon followed by Qh3+) 2. Re8! (New threat: 3.Rxf8+ and 4. Qc8+) 2… Bf5 (to stop that threat) 3. Qh5! (New threat: 4. Rxf8+ and 5. Qh8# So Black must block the e-file…) 3…Be6 and now the killer move 4. R1xe6! destroys Black's fortress. If 4…fxe6 5. Bxe6+ wins the house. Black resigned. Black had other defenses but they all at least lose a piece for nothing.

Howell said, had "great imagination and skill."

To Europe

Along with Marshall, Torre was offered a place at a celebrated tournament in Baden-Baden, Germany in March 1925. So it was that Torre sailed for Europe. On the long sea journey, he and Marshall struck up a close friendship and played a number of blitz games together, including this remarkable seven-move win by Torre with black:

Marshall, Frank
Torre-Repetto, Carlos
1925, aboard the *S.S. Antonia* bound for Germany

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 Nc6
Here Torre is trying out his new idea for a defense to 1.d4, and it succeeds brilliantly. This was dubbed the Mexican Defense, a logical name, and is still called that in some places (although it was also played at this time by the American master Alex Kevitz). But it never had much popularity and was almost forgotten until revived in the 1990s in a book by IM Georgi Orlov called *The Black Knights Tango: Outwit Your Opponents from Move 2!*
3. d5? Ne5 4. b3 e6 5. Bb2 Bb4 6. Nd2 Ne4 7. Bc1 Qf6

(see diagram, page 19)

Continued on page 20…

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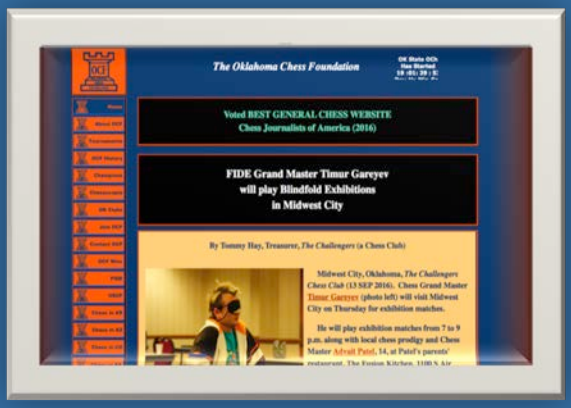
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FIDE Grand Master Timur Gareyev
will play Blindfold Exhibitions
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FOUR STATES WINTER OPEN

Abhishek Mallela (2146) of Kansas City won this G/60 event held March 4 in Joplin at the Hilton Garden Inn. He had a 4-0 score. Bob Holliman (2200) tied for 2nd place with young Luke Tran of KS, and Jason Yorke of MO. The U1400 section also had 13 players.

The event was directed by Martin Stahl in what is becoming an active chess tourney area worth checking out. www.joplinchess.org

FOUR STATES WINTER OPEN

March 4, 2017 • Joplin MO • TD: Martin Stahl

Pair #	Player Name USCF ID / Rtg (Pre->Post)	Total Pts	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
1	ABHISHEK MALLELA	4.0	W 9	W 8	W 2	W 5
MO	12888811 / R: 2146 ->2166		W	B	W	B
2	BOB HOLLIMAN	3.0	W 3	W 7	L 1	W 9
MO	10364833 / R: 2200 ->2200		B	W	B	W
3	LUKE M TRAN	3.0	L 2	W 13	W 10	W 8
KS	15393083 / R: 1610 ->1672		W	B	W	B
4	JASON RILEY YORKE	3.0	L 7	B	W 15	W 12
MO	16093033 / R: 1405P4 ->1544P7		B		W	W
5	JAMES LONG	2.5	D 12	W 11	W 7	L 1
OK	12374730 / R: 2011 ->1998		B	W	B	W
6	GARY MICHAEL WHITE	2.5	W 13	W 10	H	U
MO	10380499 / R: 1918 ->1922		W	B		
7	BEN BOAZ	2.0	W 4	L 2	L 5	W 13
MO	14947548 / R: 1729 ->1736		W	B	W	B
8	DANIEL TODD	2.0	W 14	L 1	W 12	L 3
MO	12842087 / R: 1739 ->1728		B	W	B	W
9	JOHN LAST	2.0	L 1	W 14	W 11	L 2
MO	11311679 / R: 1600 ->1615		B	W	B	B
10	MATTHEW J PRATT	2.0	B	L 6	L 3	W 15
MO	15761987 / R: 1381P22->1404P25			W	B	B
11	MERRICK ZHENG	1.5	W 15	L 5	L 9	H
MO	15204836 / R: 1386 ->1407		W	B	W	
12	RALPH E BOWMAN	1.0	D 5	D 15	L 8	L 4
KS	12421156 / R: 1540 ->1528		W	B	W	B
13	ROBERT LLOYD TALBOT	1.0	L 6	L 3	W 14	L 7
MO	12383820 / R: 1500 ->1500		B	W	B	W
14	STANLEY M HORTON	1.0	L 8	L 9	L 13	B
MO	12518019 / R: 1421 ->1400		W	B	W	
15	CHRISTOPHER L TALBOT	0.5	L 11	D 12	L 4	L 10
MO	12777197 / R: 1620 ->1540		B	W	B	W

2017 ARKANSAS OPEN

OU's Matt Dalthorp and Fort Smith teenager Steven Bellisario tied for first in the Arkansas state championship open held March 18-19 in Fayetteville. Steven wins the title as top Arkansas resident. Both of them knocked out perennial title winner Bill Orton.

Other Okie players included Veronika Vilajeva (tied for 3rd), James Long, and Danial Smith.

The Reserve section was won by Nicholas Drakes and Noah Ballinger with 4.5 points. Aaron Peters, Maxwell Barnes, and Oscar Wang were among the Okies playing.

We hope to get a selection of games for future issues.

Chief TD was Les Kline.

2017 ARKANSAS OPEN

MARCH 18-19 • FAYETTEVILLE AR • TD: Les Kline

Pair Num	Player Name USCF ID / Rtg (Pre->Post)	Total Pts	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1	MATT DALTHORP	4.0	W 11	L 2	W 9	W 6	W 8
OK	13564995 / R: 2062 ->2074						
2	STEVEN BELLISARIO	4.0	W 14	W 1	W 3	W 8	L 4
AR	15932305 / R: 1876 ->1978						
3	ABHISHEK MALLELA	3.5	W 17	W 15	L 2	D 5	W 10
MO	12888811 / R: 2166 ->2152						
4	VERONIKA ZILAJEVA	3.5	W 10	D 5	L 8	W 14	W 2
OK	15229376 / R: 2057 ->2057						
5	JOSH PRUETT	3.0	W 16	D 4	H	D 3	D 9
AR	12781148 / R: 1838 ->1863						
6	RONALD SANDERS JR	3.0	L 9	W 11	W 13	L 1	B
AR	12611171 / R: 1628 ->1671						
7	NOAH DANIEL WOOD	3.0	L 15	D 17	D 11	W 16	W 12
TX	14830006 / R: 1612 ->1671						
8	WILLIAM R ORTON III	2.5	W 12	D 9	W 4	L 2	L 1
AR	10383251 / R: 2200 ->2200						
9	BLAKE TANNER	2.5	W 6	D 8	L 1	D 12	D 5
AR	12664291 / R: 1892 ->1895						
10	PAUL J HILL	2.5	L 4	W 16	H	W 13	L 3
AR	12421404 / R: 1698 ->1716						
11	CHARLES M NIGGEL	2.5	L 1	L 6	D 7	B	W 14
AR	10382611 / R: 1723 ->1711						
12	DAVID SAYLER	2.0	L 8	W 13	H	D 9	L 7
MO	12616509 / R: 1799 ->1790						
13	DANIAL SMITH	2.0	B	L 12	L 6	L 10	W 16
OK	12575915 / R: 1740 ->1697						
14	LOU'AI REDWAN AL FAORI	2.0	L 2	B	W 15	L 4	L 11
AR	14238823 / R: 1619P20->1631P24						
15	JAMES LONG	1.0	W 7	L 3	L 14	U	U
OK	12374730 / R: 1998 ->1971						
16	CHRISTOPHER L TALBOT	1.0	L 5	L 10	B	L 7	L 13
MO	12777197 / R: 1540 ->1502						
17	MILES PRINCE BOWLIN	0.5	L 3	D 7	U	U	U
AR	15419752 / R: 1726 ->1721						

OKIES AT THE MID-AMERICA OPEN

Ryan Amburgy tied for 1st in the U1700 section of the Mid-America Open, March 25-26 in St. Louis, one of the major annual events in the general region, and pocketed $800 for his efforts. He has had both John Cope and Joe Veal as his coaches. His 4½/5 score gained over 100 rating points to near 1700.

- Advait Patel was in the lead after three rounds of the GM-heavy open section (see cross-table). He finished ½-point out of 1st place.
- Honorary Okie Ron Luther beat a GM in the first round and drew three 2300s. We will see an annotated game next issue.
- Danial Smith scored 3.5 and had another strong tournament.
- U2100 Wichita expert Jazon Wawrzaszek had a good tourney in the U2100 section and tied for 3rd place with a 4-1 score.

Among the Okies participating were: Oscar Wang, Jimmy Nazario, Aaron Peters, Maxwell Barnes, and Rebecca Rutledge.

Games next issue.

MID-AMERICA OPEN

OPEN SECTION • St. Louis • March 25-26, 2017

Pair Num	Player Name / USCF ID / Rtg (Pre->Post)	Total Pts	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1	FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ	4.0	W 24	W 34	D 10	D 14	W 17
MO	14958890 / R: 2628 ->2626	N:M	W	B	W	B	W
2	ELSHAN MORADIABADI	4.0	L 31	W 54	W 49	W 36	W 8
TX	14821464 / R: 2618 ->2611	N:C	B	W	W	B	B
3	AKSHAT CHANDRA	4.0	W 35	W 19	D 9	W 7	D 4
MO	14864036 / R: 2570 ->2576	N:S	B	W	B	W	B
4	AWONDER LIANG	4.0	W 27	W 17	D 6	W 12	D 3
WI	13999045 / R: 2556 ->2562	N:M	W	B	W	B	W
5	IRINE KHARISMA SUKANDAR	4.0	W 25	W 30	D 8	D 11	W 14
MO	15782538 / R: 2514 ->2519	N:M	B	W	B	W	B
6	MATTHEW WENDELL LARSON	4.0	W 51	W 26	D 4	W 9	H
MO	14278511 / R: 2406 ->2423	N:M	B	W	B	W	
7	ADVAIT PATEL	3.5	W 29	W 44	W 16	L 3	D 11
OK	14472386 / R: 2478 ->2477	N:M	W	B	W	B	W
8	JUSTUS WILLIAMS	3.5	W 38	W 21	D 5	W 10	L 2
NY	13534356 / R: 2443 ->2453	N:M	W	B	W	B	W
9	JOSHUA COLAS	3.5	W 36	W 22	D 3	L 6	W 29
NY	13242201 / R: 2428 ->2431	N:M	W	B	W	B	W
10	ZHAOZHI LI	3.5	W 28	W 20	D 1	L 8	W 30
IL	13646954 / R: 2422 ->2430	N:M	B	W	B	W	W
11	DAVID TIANJIAN PENG	3.5	D 39	W 43	W 40	D 5	D 7
IL	14195454 / R: 2361 ->2367	N:C	W	B	W	B	B
12	TANSEL TURGUT	3.5	W 54	D 31	W 37	L 4	W 33
IL	12569043 / R: 2344 ->2345	N:C	B	W	B	W	B
13	ISKANDER ARIPOV	3.5	D 43	W 52	L 14	W 40	W 31
MO	13743512 / R: 2335 ->2335	N:C	W	B	W	B	W
14	AARON GRABINSKY	3.0	D 37	W 58	W 13	D 1	L 5
OR	14456386 / R: 2405 ->2405	N:C	B	W	B	W	W
15	MICHAEL A BROOKS	3.0	D 32	W 39	D 31	L 29	W 36
MO	11045685 / R: 2394 ->2380	N:C	W	B	W	B	W

62 players (6 other sections)

Pioneer Chess League Update

by Bran Whitcomb

The Pioneer Chess League will be extending the regular season to allow for more teams to join, and for current teams to complete their rosters. Time is of the essence, as we will begin the regular season as soon as we meet a quota of four teams per Division.

The Western Division has given us our first full-roster team, "4 Bad Knights", with Jared Ellis, Wayne Hatcher, Logan Zachare, and newcomer Mark Sells. However, the Western Division still needs three more teams to meet the quota.

In the Eastern Division, the "Phalanx Fellas", (Michael Nugent, Anthony Paolercio, and William Loyd) are looking for a fourth player, and they need an unrated player to meet the required average strength cap. My own team, the "Knight Owls", are also close to completing our roster. But the Division still needs a couple of Captains to step up and form two more teams. Are you Captain material? ;-)

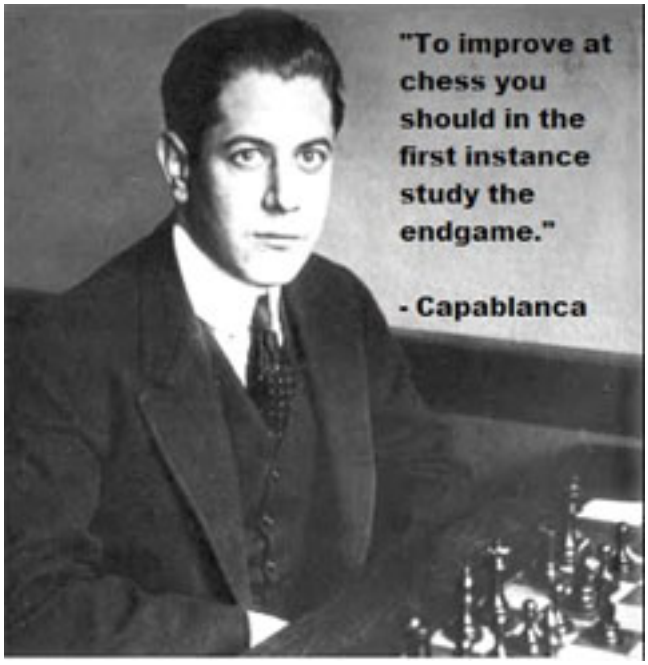
If you are interested in learning more about the League, and how to join or form a team, feel free to call or email me ASAP! :-)

Sincerely,
Bran Whitcomb, League Commissioner
branwhitcomb@gmail.com
(918) 313-4860

Capablanca, Jose Raul
Torre Repetto, Carlos [C12]
Moscow, 1925
[by Tom Braunlich]

Istvan Szabad's great article on Torre (see page 7) inspired me to look at Torre's games more closely, and doing so convinced me that this particular game, which is seldom mentioned in chess literature, must have seemed at the time as one of the most important in chess history, and could very well have been so had Torre's career not come to a sudden end. Let me set the scene:

It is 1925, a pivotal time in chess history. The nexus between the raw days of patronized amateurs, and the coming of scientific players (Alekhine), between classic play (Lasker, Tartakover, Capablanca) and "hypermodern" play (Reti, Nimzovich), and between talented individuals and the coming emergence of the "Soviet School of Chess". This was in fact the first state-sponsored event in history, designed as a showpiece by the new USSR for propaganda purposes and to kick-start their new program to develop chess into their national sport, and to take from "the West" the mantle of leadership and the prestige it brings.



It is also a time of many fascinating individual characters. There is the debonair world champion, Capablanca, the wily ex-champion Lasker (who the year before had amazed the world by winning the important New York 1924 tournament over Capa), the genius Alekhine (who, because he was an ex-Russian aristocrat is the only top player not here in Moscow). There are other fascinating players around like Sultan Khan, Nimzovich, and Marshall. Bogolyubov, whose surname means "beloved of God" in Russian, had recently shot to the top of world chess after having spent World War I in an internment camp with other chess masters, studying and playing all the time. He had married a German woman and was also a powerful force (though living in Germany, the Russians claimed him as their own, especially since he ended up winning this event).

Into this mix steps the quiet Carlos Torre, a young Mexican kid from New Orleans only 20

years old in his first foray into top-level chess. He carries with him the hopes and pride of both Mexico and USA, and has already impressed enough to be invited to this event. Can he prove himself against the world's best?

Well, months earlier, in Baden-Baden, he had easily drawn his game with Alekhine.

But today he is to face the world champion, Capablanca, and the next day he will play Lasker.

At this point in the tournament he was red hot, among the leaders. His play was sensational. He had dispatched Saemisch in 20 moves. Capablanca later said, "Young Torre, a new and little-known player, gathered such momentum that he notched up a whole series of points, and, with the competition well advanced [near the half-way mark in the 20-round event] there was no shortage of people thinking that the gifted Mexican player would cause a great surprise by taking first place."

Think about what this must have been like. In today's terms, if such was to happen in 2017, it would be like a little-known player from a third-world country, with only a few dozen games in the database, getting invited to the Sinquefield Cup -- and being on the verge of winning it -- but now he has to play Carlsen.

The stakes were thus very high in this game. Torre's reputation for brilliant attacking play was already being established. The great Cuban must have felt his reputation was on the line. Torre also needed to prove himself. With that background the players step into the ballroom of the opulent Hotel Metropol, with its gilded tall ceilings and giant crystal chandeliers, to the applause of the huge crowds. The analog clocks start ticking, and the game begins...

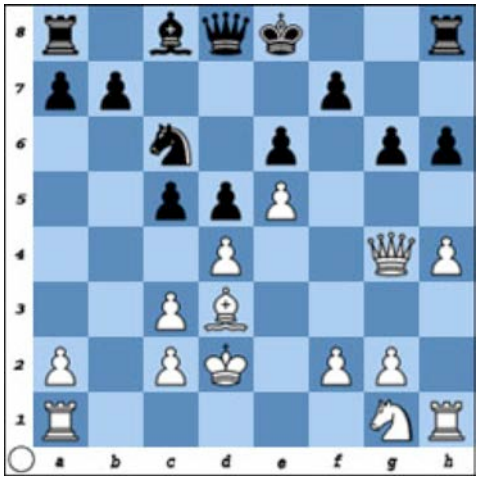
1.e4 e6 Torre often played the new “Alekhine's Defense.” Here he wisely chooses something a little more solid against the world champion.

2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4

The McCutcheon Variation was at the time still rather rare, as it had the reputation of being provocative. It is more aggressive than the other main French lines... if Black can survive the early middlegame he can often get good play against the weak doubled pawns white gets on the c-file.

5.e5 [Doubtless Torre knew that Capa had played 5.exd5 against Bogulyubov the previous year in New York. Capa managed to win that game, but got nothing from the opening. Here the world champ takes up the challenge and plays into the main line:]

5...h6 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 Ne4 8.Qg4 g6 9.Bd3 Nxd2 10.Kxd2 c5 11.h4 Nc6



This is all the main line now, but in those days it was brand new and just being established. Here Torre improves on a game from a tournament earlier that year, which went: [11...c4 12.Be2 h5 13.Qf4 Nc6 14.Nf3 Qe7 15.Ng5 b5 16.a3 a5 17.g4 Ra7 18.gxh5 gxh5 19.Rh3 b4 20.Rf3 bxc3+ 21.Rxc3 Rb7 22.Rg1 Na7 23.Rcg3 Bd7 24.Bxh5 c3+ 25.Ke3 Rxh5 26.Nxf7 Qxf7 27.Rg8+ Ke7 28.Qxf7+ Kxf7 29.R1g7# 1-0 Bogoljubow,E - Reti,R/Breslau 1925]

12.Rh3

Nowadays 12.Nf3 is more often played. The rook lift looks aggressive, but it turns out it isn't so easy and Capa soon gives up on attacking with it.

12...cxd4 13.cxd4 Bd7

In this variation, Black risks getting creamed on the kingside, where he has obvious weaknesses and will be unable to castle, but if he survives he has great play down the c-file to look forward to.

14.c3 [The impatient 14.Bxg6 is met by 14...Qa5+ 15.c3 fxg6 16.Qxg6+ Kd8 etc. Capa decides instead to avoid tactics against this young kid and see if he can steer for an endgame... Over the years this is how Capa had defeated many young challengers, with his endgame skill. Will it work on Torre?]

14...Qe7 15.Qd1 Na5

[Thematic, planning play down the c-file; but it seems Capa is ready for this. A more aggressive approach for Torre would have been 15...0-0-0 16.Nf3 f6 17.exf6 Qxf6 18.Qe2 and the computer here says it is equal, but Capa would have been under some pressure here with his king in the middle.]

16.Qb1! The idea of this is to have available Qb4 trading queens as a way to counter black's c-file pressure.

16...Rc8 17.Ne2

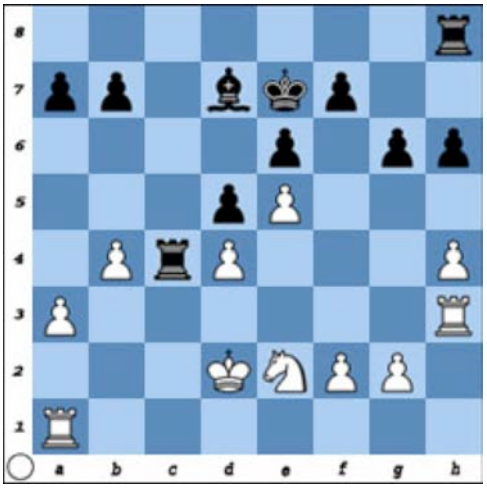
An interesting moment in the game. As usual in the French, the position is dynamically even and there are many choices for both sides. I haven't seen any GM commentaries on this game, and I don't know what a French expert would say, but it seems to me this is a turning point position. Torre could play it safe, or be aggressive. The move Torre chooses (...Rc6) threatens ...Rb6 and somewhat forces Capa to trade queens -- but this is what Capa wants to do! He believes he will get a good knight vs. bad bishop ending he can work with.

17...Rc6!?

Lots of other moves were possible here, but the most aggressive try would have been 17...b6 menacing the threat ...Nc4+. Now if 18.Qb4 Nc4+ 19.Bxc4 Rxc4 20.Qxe7+ Kxe7 we get a more favorable version of the same ending, with white having a weak pawn on c3.

Instead, if 17...b6 Capa might have been forced to go into complications with something like 18.Nf4 (eyeing sacs on g6), with a possible line my computer gives which is 18...Qa3 19.Qc1 Qa4 with what looks like an aggressive setup that would suit Torre's style. However, the computer points out White can calmly retreat his king 20.Ke1, a very Capa-like move, and meet the typical French idea of 20...Bb5 (trading bishops) with 21.Qc2 and again Capa gets the queen exchange. 21...Qxc2 22.Bxc2 Still, this ending is fine for black, better than what he gets in the game.

18.Qb4! Qxb4 19.cxb4 Nc4+ 20.Bxc4 Rxc4 21.a3 Ke7



Torre must have been satisfied here. He has equalized the game against Capablanca with black. And yet, Capa no doubt was satisfied too! He knows how to win theoretically equal endings against young players, and is looking forward to doing it again! The first step will be to trade off all the rooks and leave black with a slightly bad bishop. That plus the slight advantage in space white enjoys is enough for Capablanca to think he has chances to outplay his opponent here.

22.Rc3 Rhc8 23.Rac1 Rxc3?!

I don't think Torre should have fallen into

White's plans. If he thought the draw was imminent he is soon going to be regretting these trades. More stubborn was 23...Bb5 Then if white trades all the rooks on the c-file Black's bishop will end up on c4, well posted, and the draw is obvious. Compare this with the game. It is possible that Torre decided to simplify here because he may have been in some time pressure -- in this tournament the first time control fell on move 30.

24.Rxc3 Rxc3 25.Nxc3

It's the same ending except black's B on d7 is passive instead of happy on c4. A small thing, but that is all Capa needs to get a little going here. And indeed, watch how he weaves his magic even against normal play by Torre.

25...f6 26.Ke3 g5 Forcing some pawn trades...

27.exf6+ Kxf6 28.hxg5+ Kxg5

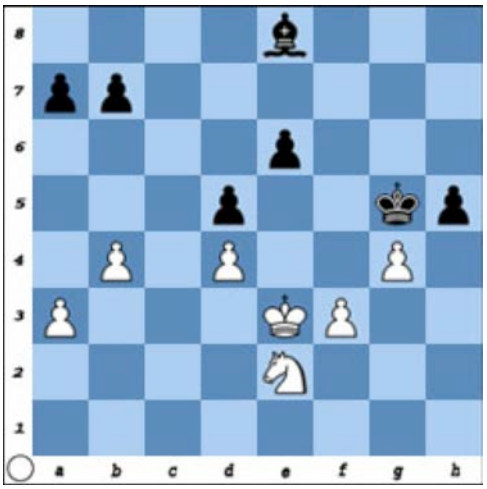
[28...hxg5 29.g4 followed by f2-f4 would produce a dangerous passed pawn. However, now Black's king is tied to guarding f4 and e5.]

29.f3 Be8 30.g4 Bc6

[30...h5? 31.gxh5 Bxh5 32.Nb5 a6 33.Nd6 is not what Black wants!]

31.a4 Bd7 32.b5 Be8 33.Ne2 h5?!

This is Torre's only real mistake. He seizes his chance to trade off a couple more pawns, but it allows Capa to make inroads. [The computer says 33...Kf6 34.Nf4 Bf7 is still equal. If then 35.Nd3 Bg6 *(35...b6? 36.Nb4)* 36.Nc5 b6 and the threat of ...Bc2 draws for Black.]



34.Nf4! hxg4 35.Nxe6+ Kh4

[35...Kf6 36.Nc7 Bf7 37.fxg4 Kg5 38.Kf3 would also have given up a pawn for Black.]

36.fxg4 Kxg4 37.Nd8!

Capa is going to win a pawn anyway! Amazing. Still, material is much reduced. Will Torre be able to hold it?

37...Kf5! [37...b6 38.Nc6 a5 39.Ne7 Bf7 40.Nc8 drops the pawn anyway. Now Torre begins fierce resistance, showing excellent endgame skills that are worth study.]

38.Nxb7 Ke6

Apparently this is the key position. The great champion was legendary for his uncanny handling of delicate endgames like this one. Will he win it?

39.Kd3

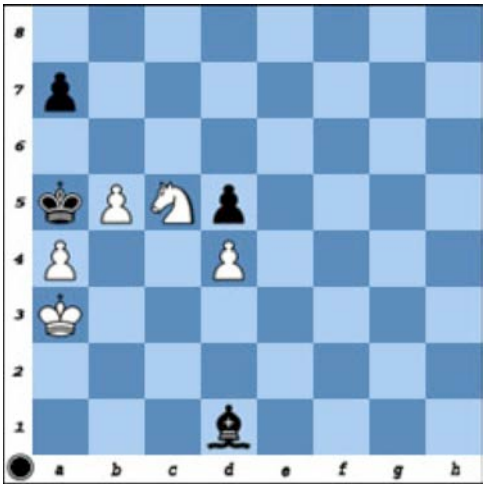
I believe myself and a lot of players would play the natural 39.Kf4 here, but it would allow counterplay on white's vulnerable queenside pawns with 39...Bh5 for example, 40.Nc5+ Kd6 41.a5 Kc7 42.Ke5 Be2 43.Kxd5 Bxb5 and the win appears elusive, if it still exists at all.

Instead, Capa missed his chance to win here (according to the program Komodo) with 39.Nc5+ The point is that white can avoid the amazing defense Torre comes up with in the game by preventing black's king from reaching b6. 39...Kd6 40.Na6! covering c7 (so that Black can't get to b6) and if Black proceeds to dislodge this knight we get 40...Bd7 41.Kd2 Bc8 42.Nc5 Kc7 43.a5 and if you compare this position with the game you can see White is way ahead. Still, the game continuation must have looked good to the Cuban also. But... he is overlooking Black's 45th move!

39...Kd7 40.Nc5+ now comes a forced sequence...

40...Kc7 41.Na6+ Kb6 42.Kc3 Ka5 43.Kb3 Bh5! 44.Ka3 Bd1 45.Nc5

(See diagram next page)



And now, the young Torre shows why he had the talent to be a championship contender...

45...a6!!

Had Torre seen this move coming from many moves ago? You bet he did! I think he saw it and Capa didn't. Down a pawn, he sacrifices another; but the result is White's knight is now awkwardly tied down. Put this position on a computer and it thinks White is winning. But after awhile it changes its mind...

46.bxa6 Kb6 47.Kb4 Be2 48.a5+ Ka7 49.Ne6

To make any progress Capablanca has to give up one of the extra pawns. But isn't he still winning?

49...Bxa6 50.Nc7 Bc4 51.Kc5

Ahh, it looks over now, doesn't it?

51...Bb3! 52.Kc6

[It turns out 52.Nxd5 Ka6 draws easily. White can't defend the a-pawn without losing his knight, and after the a-pawn goes the black bishop sacs itself for the remaining white pawn. Capa tries another way...]

52...Bc4 53.a6 Be2!

[53...Bxa6?? 54.Nxa6 Kxa6 55.Kxd5 wins for white.]

54.Kxd5 Two pawns up now. Do you think Capa is finally winning?

54...Kb6! 55.Kd6

The Knight must be protected, because if it moves the a-pawn falls and again that's a draw.

55...Bg4! Putting White in Zugzwang! Any move except by the d-pawn will either lose the knight or the a-pawn.

56.d5 Bf3! ½ - ½

And now the draw is forced, because Black will play ...Bxd5 next move!

For example... if (1) 57.Kd7 Bxd5 58.Nxd5+ Kxa6 draw. or (2) 57.Ne6 Bxd5 58.Kxd5 Kxa6.

To my mind, this is an under-appreciated game. Torre went toe-to-toe with the then world champion, and even despite a couple subtle lapses in the middlegame that allowed Capablanca to show his endgame magic Torre actually outplayed him beautifully in the ending to achieve a study-like draw. The result must have been a shock to the champion, who was used to winning games like that against even the best players. For the kid, not yet 21, to save this game, was impressive indeed.

On the very next day, Torre played the great Lasker, and "rolled him up like a burrito" (as FKB would say) with an amazing combination that became famous the world over; the famous "windmill" game. (See the article.)

At this point, who would have not believed that Torre soon would get his chance at the world championship and be a tough challenger for Capablanca to handle? There would have been plenty of backers in New York who would have put up the money for such a match.

Yet it was not to be. As described in the article, Torre had a nervous breakdown in 1926 and quit chess completely. In 1927 it was Alekhine, not Torre, who got his shot at the world crown, and who won it from the great Cuban. For Torre's fans, all they were left with was "what could have been."

Mar 1 2017 **Pioneer Chess League Season** **OK**

Pre-season team signups begin January 1. See Article last issue. More info on the OCF website.

Apr 8-9 2017 **Missouri State University Open** **Springfield MO**

Co-hosted by MSU and Joplin Chess Clubs. 5-SS, G/90, +30. Plaster Student Union Ballroom (3rd floor), 1110 E. Madison St., Springfield, MO 65897. $$ b/25 non-scholastic entries. Open: $150-120, U1600 90, U1400: 60, U1200 40. 5.0 Bonus: $40. EF: $30 by 4/7, $40 at door. Scholastic (rating only) $15 by 4/7, $25 at door. Email entry accepted for lower rate. MCA membership required, OSA. Reg.: 8-9:30. Rounds: Sat 10, 2:30, 7; Sun 10, 2:30. Byes: One 1/2 point bye if requested before round 3. Ent: martin.stahl@joplinchess.org with cash on-site or mailed to Joplin Chess Club, 2609 New Hampshire, Joplin, MO 64804. Checks payable to Martin Stahl. Parking: See www.missouristate.edu/visitors/parking.htm Info: joplinchess.org, martin.stahl@joplinchess.org, 417-483-1554.

Apr 22 2017 **6th "Do or Do Not" Quads** **Norman OK**

3-RR Quads; G/60 + 30. OU Student Union. More Info: http://oklahoma.orgsync.com/org/chess/home

Apr 29 2017 **15th Annual Red River Shootout** **Davis OK**

This is the REAL Red River Shootout, the annual team match between the most fanatical chess players in Oklahoma and Texas. 2 games with same opponent. More details at http://rrsochess.net/rrso_home.html#RRSO including the history of the event, team captains, and more.

May 27-28 2017 Frank K Berry Memorial Tulsa OK

5-SS; G/90+30; Trade Winds Central Hotel, 3141 E. Skelly Dr (NW corner of 51st and Harvard), Tulsa OK 74105 (918-749-5561). Free WiFi, www.tradewindstulsa.com Hotel Rates: $55-$69. Two Sections: Open, and Reserve (U1700). EF: $40 if mailed by 5/21, $50 thereafter, FREE entry for Masters 2200+ (deducted from prizewinnings). Free OCF Memb. Prizes $$2400 (1st prize Gtd., the rest b/65). Open: $600(G)-250 U2100: 200-100, U1900: 200-100, Reserve (U1700): $300-200, U1400: 200-100, U1100/UNR: 150. More $$ if entries permit. Byes: One half-point bye Rds 1-5 if commit before Sat 9PM. REG: 9-9:45 Sat AM Rounds: 10-2:30-7, 9-1:15. Possible bughouse tournament. Entries to: Tom Braunlich, 7500 S. Birch, Broken Arrow OK 74011. Inquiries: tom.braunlich@cox.net Web: www.ocfchess.org

Jun 9-11 2017 **10th Anniversary Scarlet CC Open** **Jonesboro AR**

5-SS; event that promises a $5000 prize fund. Details TBA.

July 22-23 2017 **Kansas Open** **Wichita KS**

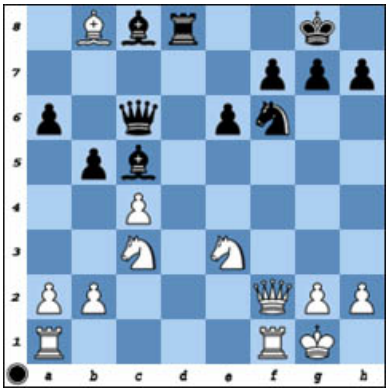
5-SS; G/2;d5. Holiday Inn, 549 South Rock Rd., Wichita KS. EF$45 adv by July 15, $55 at door. Bughouse and Blitz tournaments Friday night 7/21. Three sections: Open, Reserve (U1800), Amateur (U1400) Inquiries: Laurence Coker. Wlcoker7@hotmail.com Information website: http://www.kansaschess.org/htdocs/2017KansasOpenFlier2.pdf

Here are two nice games well annotated by expert Jason Howell from the recent Waco city championship (Janes Cup). http://bit.ly/IMMdYT

Howell, Jason (1935)
Lund, Jason (1546)
Janes Cup Waco TX (1.1), 08.01.2017 [B54]
[Howell, Jason]

Jason has a degree in computer programming and works in management for a major vending company. Notable achievements include five first place finishes in the Texas State Amateur Championship, and Class A prize in the 1998 Southwest Open where he had a plus score against six masters.

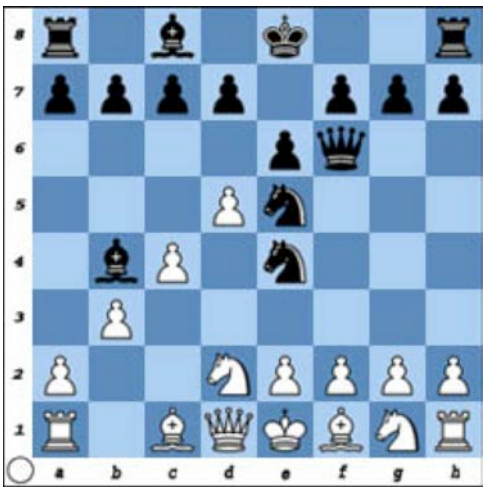
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6!? Black employs a sort of accelerated Najdorf. I decide to bear down on d5. 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.Be2 e6 8.Nc2 The Knight removes itself from the center to take watch over the dark squares and give the Bc1 more scope when it goes to e3. 8...Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Be3 Qc7 11.f4 Rd8 Black is trying to get d5 in. 12.Bf3 Rb8 13.Qe2 b6 14.Qf2 b5 15.e5!? The beginning of some risky business by White. He is obviously looking to f7. 15...dxe5 16.Bxc6 exf4! I like this move, and Black's game for that matter. After this, I was certain that 15. e5 was premature and should have been played only after the King was on h1. [16...Qxc6 17.fxe5] 17.Bxf4 Qxc6! 18.Bxb8!? After a long think about what will ensue on the e3 square, I decided to accept the rook and be ready to give back a piece and just be up the exchange. There was no doubt Black was going to have good compensation. 18...Bc5! 19.Ne3 (see diagram)



19... Ng4??
A blunder that allows some pretty finishing fireworks for White. [I like 19...Bb7! attacking the b8 bishop while pressuring g2 and e3. Black has excellent compensation here.] 20.Qxf7+ Kh8 21.Kh1 Nxe3 22.Rf3 Nxg2? 23.Be5! Rg8 24.Rg1! Bxg1 [24...Nh4 25.Bxg7+ Rxg7 26.Qxg7#; 24...Bd6 25.Nd5 exd5 26.Rf6+-] 25.Qxg7+ Black resigns. 1-0

Guel, Eric (1163)
Howell, Jason (1935)
Janes Cup Waco TX (2.1), 10.01.2017 [D00]
[Howell, Jason]

1.d4 d5 2.Bf4 The London System. An opening that requires little study, but has creepy crawly venom against unalert players. **2...Nf6 3.e3 Nbd7 4.Nf3 c6 5.Bd3 g6 6.Nbd2 Bg7 7.c3 0-0 8.Qc2** [8.h3] **8...Nh5 9.Bg3 f5** [There is nothing wrong with snatching up the Bishop pair with 9...Nxg3 10.hxg3 e5= but I just didn't feel like an open h-file game.] **10.Ng5 Ndf6 11.Be5 Ng4 12.Bxg7 Nxg7 13.h3 Nxf2!?** With this sacrifice, Black aims to prevent Queenside castling and start a pawn storm that coaxes White to at least return the piece. **14.Kxf2 e5! 15.h4 e4 16.Be2 h6** [16...f4!?] **17.Nh3 f4 18.Nxf4 g5 19.g3** [Here I thought Eric should have opened the h-file with 19.hxg5! hxg5 20.g3≤ and Black is in no hurry to capture the Knight and open the g-file as well until he absolutely has to, as 20...gxf4? 21.gxf4 Qf6 22.Rag1 suddenly gives White a large advantage.]**19...gxf4 20.gxf4 Nf5 21.h5 Qf6** [21...Kh7!=] **22.Rag1+ Kh7 23.Rg6 Qe7 24.Rhg1??** Eric has played very well, but this move lets the Black Queen move in with decisive effect. [Much better is 24.Qb3 (planning c4) or 24.Qd1 relocating to the Kingside. White has very good chances of converting the extra pawn.] **24...Qh4+ 25.R6g3** [25.Kf1 Nxe3#; 25.Kg2 Nxe3#] **25...Nxe3! 26.Nf3 Qxg3+ 27.Rxg3 Nxc2 28.Rg4 exf3** 0-1



0-1

Marshall resigned. The queen menaces both mate on f2 and the rook in the corner. If 8. Ngf3 then 8… Ng4 wins easily – i.e. 9. Rb1, Nexf2 10. Qc2, Ne3 11. Qb2, Bc3 12. Qa3, Nc2+ wins the queen.

Torre's recently-won reputation and praise by Lasker had preceded him to the tournament in Baden-Baden. Despite a slight edge in the opening of his first-round match against Alekhine, Torre, perhaps tired from the trip, offered a draw. In the tournament book, Zubarev remarked, "the fact that Alekhine accepted the offer of a draw needs to be explained not by circumstance, but by the impression which it seems the Mexican's previous play had made on the grandmaster."

Torre placed 10th behind Aaron Nimzowitsch and ahead of Richard Reti.

A week after Baden-Baden, Torre entered the Marienbad tournament in Czechoslovakia, finishing on joint third place (with Marshall) behind Nimzowitsch and Akiba Rubinstein.

Nimzowitsch announced the arrival of a new "chess genius" and, according to Torre himself, greeted him in a Marienbad street by screaming in German: "Torre is a great master!" and "Long live Mexico!" Reti also praised Torre for his "maturity" and "self-control," and for refusing to succumb to the distractions of fame and fortune. Based on his growing reputation, Torre was a last-minute invitee to the biggest tournament of the year, in Moscow.

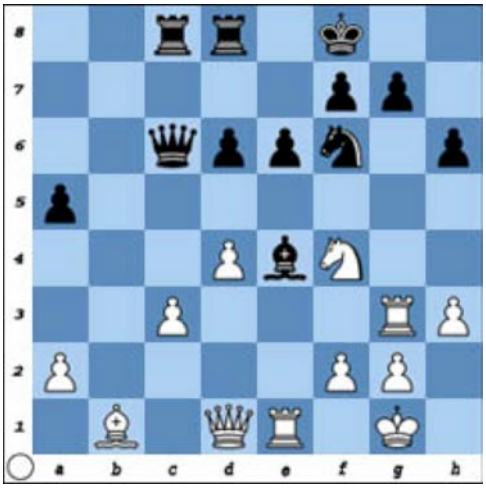
Moscow 1925

Torre made his way to the Moscow tournament in November 1925 to compete in one of the strongest such events ever held. It was organized by the new Soviet Union as its first major push into international chess, pitting their ten best players against eleven of the best international players. Only Alekhine, the former Russian, did not participate. World champion Capablanca was there, plus top players including previous champion Emanuel Lasker, future challenger Efim Bogoljubov, Marshall, Reti, and Rubinstein. Thus it was a big honor for Torre to be even invited into this group of famous names, considering he had only just recently made his international debut.

Another interesting thing about this event is that it was recorded by Soviet filmmakers who were making the movie *Chess Fever*, in which Capablanca was an actor. Thus we have rare movie footage of all these great players — including Torre — available to see now online. This is one interesting version which mixes up this footage with a Spanish movie made about Capablanca: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8ARyB1Dado

Torre began stunningly well with three straight wins and was leading after the first nine games. His first round game:

Torre-Repetto, Carlos
Dus Chotimirsky, Fyodor
Moscow 1925, Round 1



31. Nh5!
Beginning a deadly tactical sequence. 31... Bxb1 32. Nf6 Bg6 33. d5! ed5 34. Nd5 Rd7 35. Rge3 Rcd8 36. Qf3 Qb7 37. Nf6! Qc8 (If 37... Qxf3 then 38. Re8 mates, or if 37...gxf6 then 38. Qxf6 mates also.) 38. Re8 Re8 39. Re8 Qe8 40. Ne8 Ke8 41. Qa8 Ke7 42. Qa5 Be4 43. Qb4 f5 44. a4 Rb7 45. Qd4 Rb1 46. Kh2 Rb2 47. Qg7 Ke6 48. Qh6 Kd5 49. Qe3 Kc4 50. Qd4 Kb3 51. Qd6 Ka4 52. h4 Kb3 53. h5 Kc3 54. h6 Rb7 55. f3! 1-0

Capablanca declared: "It wouldn't surprise me if this young man were soon starting to beat us all."

After Torre's brilliant defeat of Saemisch in just twenty moves using the Torre Attack...

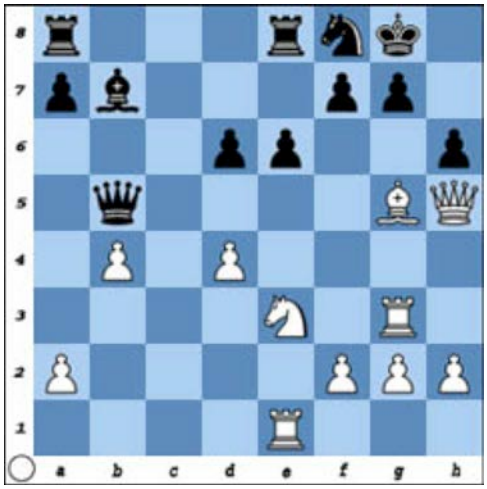
Torre-Repetto, Carlos
Saemisch, Frederich
Moscow 1925, Round 7
1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. Bg5 c5 4. e3 Nc6 5. Nbd2 b6 6. c3 Bb7 7. Bd3 cd4 8. ed4 Be7 9. Nc4 Qc7 10. Qd2 Rc8 11. O-O h6 12. Bf4 d6 13. Rfe1 Nd8 14. Qd1 Nd5 15. Bg3 O-O 16. Nh4 g5 17. Qh5 Kg7

18. Re6! Ne6 19. Nf5 Kg8 20. Nh6 1-0

... he went on to get a beautiful draw with World Champion Capablanca in round 10 (see "Game of the Month" in this issue for analysis of it). Then he used his namesake opening again to beat Emanuel Lasker in the famous "windmill" sacrifice game:

Torre-Repetto, Carlos
Lasker, Emanuel
Moscow 1925, Round 11

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. Bg5 c5 4. e3 cd4 5. ed4 Be7 6. Nbd2 d6 7. c3 Nbd7 8. Bd3 b6 9. Nc4 Bb7 10. Qe2 Qc7 11. O-O O-O 12. Rfe1 Rfe8 13. Rad1 Nf8 14. Bc1 Nd5 15. Ng5 b5 16. Na3 b4 17. cb4 Nb4 18. Qh5 Bg5 19. Bg5 Nd3 20. Rd3 Qa5 21. b4! Qf5 22. Rg3 h6 23. Nc4 Qd5 24. Ne3 Qb5



25. Bf6!!

Beginning a combination that was published

in newspapers around the world and made Torre famous. 25… Qxh5 Black's Q was attacked, so he has no choice. But now begins the rare "windmill" combination. 26. Rg7 Kh8 27. Rf7 Kg8 28. Rg7 Kh8 29. Rb7 Kg8 30. Rg7 Kh8 31. Rg5 (Time to win back his queen now. Note he does not grab the a-pawn also, as at the end of the combo black's rook would then have the open a-file to use.) …Kh7 32. Rh5 Kg6 33. Rh3 Kf6 34. Rh6 Kg5 35. Rh3 (The ending is hopeless for Lasker. He plays a few moves and then gives up.) Reb8 36. Rg3 Kf6 37. Rf3 Kg6 38. a3 a5 39. ba5 Ra5 40. Nc4 Rd5 41. Rf4 Nd7 42. Re6 Kg5 43. g3 1-0

This game is called "The Mexican Immortal Game" in Mexico. Surprisingly, Torre downplayed this celebrated game's appeal, declaring that neither he nor Lasker had played well. Nevertheless, the young player's brilliant queen sacrifice (he was still not 21 years old) made him famous around the chess world.

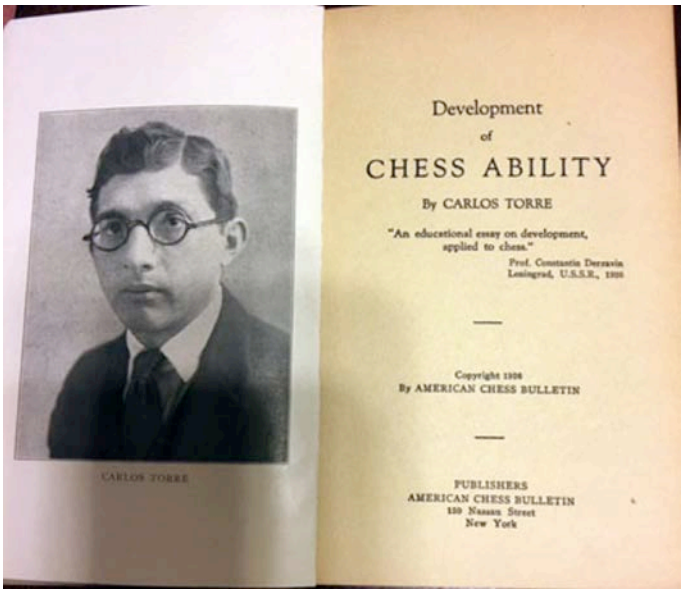
For now, let us recall that Torre's defeat of Lasker in Moscow prompted voices to grow predicting that the Mexican would be a future world champion.

Torre's play cooled off a little in the second half of the grueling 20-round tournament, while Bogoljubov and Capablanca came on strong. But he ended up in an impressive tie for fifth place with the best players in the world.

Moscow 1925 Results:

1. Bogoljubov (15½), 2. Em. Lasker (14), 3. Capablanca (13½). 4. Marshall (12½), 5. Torre (12) 5. Tartakover (12) … 21 players.

After the tournament, Torre was invited to Leningrad. During his two-month stay there, Professor Konstantin Derzhavin of Leningrad University invited him to write a short essay on the educational value of chess. This quickly appeared in Russian in Leningrad, in March 1926. Later the same year, it was published in English by the *American Chess Bulletin* as "Development of Chess Ability" (I am proud owner of one original issue!).



The Soviet Effect Upon Torre

The Russian master Abraham Model, who was the leading trainer in Leningrad at the time, wrote:

> *"With Capablanca and the Peruvian Esteban Canal, the Mexican Torre has shown that it is from the new continent that the light is shinning to show us the way towards reviving world chess, dominated for so many decades by the central empires of Europe. Today, with the USSR school and the creative energy of Spanish America, it is finding new course. Torre comes from a country which, like ours, has shattered centuries of chains and is revolutionizing the world of the 20th century… From very different lands, with very different climates and customs, we feel he is one of ours now after hearing his words which speak of fraternity among men and international co-existence of the workers from all over the world."* *(New in Chess, 4/2013 p.84)*

Model, speaking as a communist here, is making reference to the violent and bloody years in Mexican history between 1910 and 1920 from which Torre's family had fled to New Orleans when he was a child. This was the time of the Mexican revolution (Pancho

Villa, Emiliano Zapata, etc.) It was actually a bloody civil war. During the 35-year long regime of President Porfirio Diaz, the social injustice increased as the aristocracy essentially ruled over a worker class of people living peasants' lives. President Diaz fled to France and the country sank into a period of chaos and armed clashes. Torre's family had been against the dictatorships.

Model's interesting comparison between the revolutionary Mexico of the early 20th century and the emerging Soviet revolution may have some bearing on Torre's life. An interview with Torre appeared in the Soviet Union in 1925, in English and on behalf of a U.S. Communist workers' organization, in which the Mexican made some unflattering remarks about the situation in the U.S. at that time. Could this, as Raul Ocampo Vargas has suggested, have made Torre a target for political enemies in America? Torre always rejected invitations to become a U.S. citizen, it should be pointed out, because he wanted his victories to be "for Mexico."

Ocampo has an intriguing interpretation of the USSR's handling of Torre during his stay.

> *"At this time, the Soviet Union was consolidating its diplomatic relations with Mexico. … But I don't think Torre's participation in the Moscow tournament benefited much from this fact, because Torre was – from the Soviet trainers' point of view – a United States player. The Soviet journalists, however, emphasized that Torre was the son and brother of political revolutionaries who had been against the Diaz dictatorship in Mexico... The fact is that Torre was politically useful for the Soviet organizers, who tried to keep him in the USSR as long as possible."* *(New in Chess, 4/2013 p.85)*

Torre was invited to tour the regional Soviet capitals, and indeed he did travel to Vilnius, Riga and Tallin.

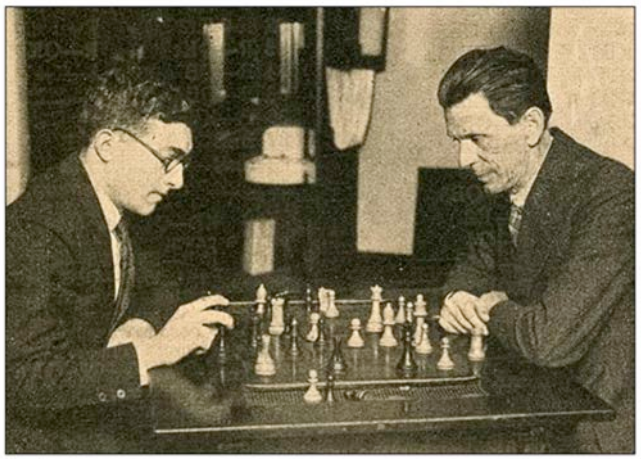
The Soviet authorities were initially disillusioned to learn that Torre had spent only the first eight years of his life in Mexico before moving to the U.S. and that he had kept his distance from the Mexican Revolution. But in talking to Torre, they learned that his family had fled into political exile because they had come into conflict with counter-revolutionaries. Thus, wrote Vargas, "The idea … was to work ideologically with Torre and turn him into a solid supporter of the Socialist ideas espoused by the Soviet Union."

The notes of the Soviet master Alexander Ilyin-Genevsky practically represent a planned mission to turn Torre into a convinced Socialist. They succeeded. But in so doing, they did terrible harm to a young man who enjoyed the special patronage of several North American magnates.

Back to Mexico and on to Chicago

Not surprisingly, the U.S. authorities (for political reasons) initially did not give him permission to return to the U.S. after his long time spent in the Soviet Union. So Torre went home to Mexico for the first time in a decade, arriving at Veracruz on April 19, 1926. Then he played in Mexico City and stayed there three months before continuing on to Zacatecas, where he was warmly received by chess aficionados. He then accepted an invitation from the Yucatan Chess Circle to return to his hometown of Merida at the end of July, giving a simultaneous display there.

In August he was able to sail to New Orleans, and from there he took the train to Chicago to take part in the Chicago Masters. The tournament featured most of the strongest U.S. players as well as the Hungarian Geza Maroczy. He beat Maroczy and Marshall, and seemed to be duplicating his strong form from the previous year's triumphs in Europe. But Edward Lasker beat him in the last round to prevent him from winning the event. Torre finished a disappointing 2nd place behind Marshall.



Carlos Torre and Géza Maróczy, Chicago, 1926 (*American Chess Bulletin*, November 1926, page 140)

Sudden Withdrawal from Chess

That game against Edward Lasker in Chicago, on September 2, 1926, was the last serious grandmaster game of his chess career. He was just 21 years old.

The mystery of why such a promising player as Torre—who some had predicted would be a future world champion—should suddenly quit the game has baffled his fans ever since.

What happened in Chicago? There has been much speculation about it. As with Morphy, some of the theories are little more than speculative romantic embellishments. Still, it does seem like something transpired there that caused him to give up the sport. The answer to this question may explain why Torre withdrew from competitive chess. Let's look at some of the theories:

Did Torre Suffer a Broken Heart?

Several sources (including a 1962 biography of Torre and a 2013 article in *New in Chess* magazine) put forward the following romantic explanation given on page 425 of *The Oxford Companion to Chess* by D. Hooper and K. Whyld (Oxford, 1992):

> *At Chicago later that year [1926], just before the last round … [in which he lost to Ed. Lasker], Torre received two letters by the same post, one informing him that he would not get the teaching post for lack of academic qualifications, and the other from his fiancée saying she had married someone else. He suffered a nervous breakdown, returned to Mexico at the end of the year, took an ill-paid job in a drug-store, and played no more serious chess.*

As was the case with Morphy, the idea that a woman ruined him has been a popular one. But Taylor Kingston, who translated into English Gabriel Velasco's biography of Torre, reported that when he asked Velasco about this, the biographer "expressed the opinion that the letters never existed. He pointed to two big improbabilities: one, that the Mexican government would offer financial support to a chessplayer, and two, that Torre, who was not noted for romantic involvement with women, would have been engaged."

Was Torre Assaulted in Chicago?

The Dutch magazine *New in Chess* also wrote in its 4/2013 issue:

> *A number of sources claim that the congress organizers reduced the 2nd place prize money due to him. Torre supposedly issued a written protest, but his pleas were not only ignored, but — according to at least one report —he was beaten up by unknown assailants in a Chicago street and when he tried to defend himself was arrested by the local police and jailed. While in detention, according to these same sources, he was drugged with an intravenous injection (probably Dopamine). After this, he was declared "persona non grata," his visa was withdrawn, and he was expelled from the U.S. The drug was alleged to have had long-term negative consequences for his health.*

Raul Ocampo believes this version of events — and goes even further. He claims that there is no doubt Torre felt he had been the target of an illegal attempt to prevent him winning the Chicago tournament.

Ocampo's argument goes as follows:

> *"They wanted to harass a player who had been pride of the United States chess world but who had travelled to the recently created Soviet Union and had made a prolonged stay there, going on to revolutionary Mexico in the 1920s. In both countries, there was a clearly anti-American atmosphere which could not help influencing a 21-year-old-man who was no longer 'our young man' for North American chess and was now daring to try to win the top tournament in the U.S. That could not be allowed and there were many ways of 'destabilizing' a young man. I can imagine how furious Torre must have been when he received far less prize money than he deserved. He insulted the person handing him the prize, which he threw on the ground in a natural gesture of contempt towards those who had laid a trap for him. The organizers responded to the insult from this foreign youth with a show of force which they were then forced to justify by passing him off as mad."* *(New in Chess, 4/2013 p.84)*

Ocampo's scenario is obviously a highly speculative one, and unproven. He maintains that, when he asked Edward Lasker whether he could corroborate this version, Lasker became very angry and walked away.

Did Torre Go Psychotic?

Another popular theory is that after the disappointing finish of the Chicago tournament, Torre went to Manhattan, where presumably the pressures he was under led him to have a psychotic episode. This story mainly stems from a rumor reported by Reuben Fine (the grandmaster who was also a psychologist), among others, that Torre attempted to remove his clothes on a Fifth Avenue bus.

It is a common public misconception about chess geniuses that they must be obsessed with the game to become that good, and therefore must always be on the edge of going crazy. The many examples of great players who had normal personalities and lived normal lives are discounted in view of the few prominent instances like Fischer (or, some say, Morphy).

Did Torre Hate Being a Political Pawn?

Dr. Carlos Fruvas Gárnica, who treated Torre and seemed to be very close to him, says Torre became a victim of his own success: "In 1926 there was no Mexican politician, general, rich retailer, or monopolistic millionaire that did not want Torre to attend their social gatherings."

It's Gárnica's contention that Torre was used by political, military, and financial leaders to augment their important public functions. They had no interest and little involvement in chess, yet they "invited" Torre to appear at their constant stream of parties. They wined him and dined him; faking interest in a subject they knew nothing about. He felt like a rope in some tug-of-war. So incessant were the invitations that he often had to refuse one to attend another. The political climate in Mexico at that time made refusing a dangerous thing.

Perhaps the same was true for him when he was in Russia and used by them for propaganda as well. In short, the doctor believes Torre was a victim of stress and found the only way to escape this stress was to escape the reality of his existence—that is, to not be a famous chess player.

"...they want to think that Torre lost the reason by some dark cause," Gárnica said. "I prefer to think that Carlos Torre retired voluntarily from chess not to have to report to that society of crazy people."

Did Torre Suffer a Nervous Breakdown?

Torre himself gave an interview to his biographer Gabriel Velasco at an old age home in Merida in 1977, just a year before his death:

> *"After the tournament in Chicago, in 1926 my health was shattered due to dietary difficulties. In fact, I suffered a nervous*

breakdown... Travel and high-level tournament life is pretty intense and alienating. I preferred to return to my own country and work with my brother on something more stable. Afterwards, I abandoned competitive chess but never my love for this beautiful game."

And now let's see what Reuben Fine wrote in his book *The World's Great Chess Games*:

"...Unfortunately he suffered a nervous breakdown and had to retire from chess. From time to time there have been rumors of his recovery, but he has never been well enough to return to the game he loved and enriched. I met Torre in Monterey, Mexico in 1934 where two exhibition games were arranged. He was still very nervous and withdrawn and warned me not to spend too much money; aside from this, he was generally rather disinterested in what was going on. In the games he was no longer the old Torre."

Conclusion:

Torre Loved the Art of Chess, But Not the Competition

First, many people who knew Torre discounted the story of the unhappy love affair. They said he was not interested in any relationship with women. Yet Gabriel Velasco asked Torre, in an interview in 1977, whether it was true — as Reuben Fine had alleged — that he had advised his fellow chess players to keep away from women "because they cost too much money." Torre replied:

"I don't remember saying that but, now that you mention it, no one can deny that they cost a lot of money! But they're a 'necessary evil.' As that great ancient Greek philosopher, Socrates, put it: 'whether you marry or not, you're going to regret it.'"

Even the famous chess historian Edward Winter regards the "unhappy love affair" and "taking off the clothes on the bus" stories to be highly dubious. In his book *Chess Facts and Fables,* in a chapter titled "Gaffes" (!), he wrote, "Writers like Reuben Fine and Alexander Cockburn wrote things like that about Torre even if (especially if) it entails a great master of the past being ridiculed or depicted as a freak."

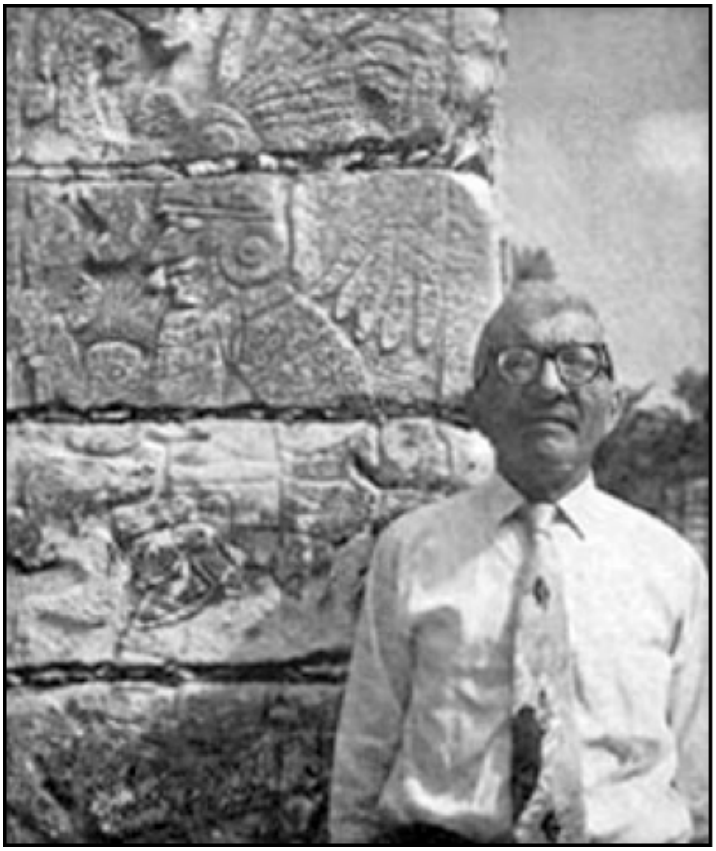
As there are about half-dozen theories about Torre, and since we don't know crucial details, we have to believe what Torre himself claimed — that he retired from chess by his own free will.

Consider what we know about Torre's personality. Unlike Alekhine or Fischer, for whom winning was everything, Torre played for the beauty of the game. He loved the harmony of the pieces seen in high-level play. Even more than such players as Capablanca or Rubinstein, he considered the game an art. For example, recall Torre's comment about his windmill win against Lasker, in which he downplayed the beauty of the game because mistakes were made before the famous combination.

Torre wrote extensively about the philosophy of chess. In one essay, he wrote, "A chess game is and must be considered like a species of harmonics set, or a unit that is equally important in each one of its phases. Only when we have reached such balance, we can say that we played chess." (http://www.edochess.ca/batgirl/torre2.html)

There are stories that sometimes when he was in a winning position against a weak player he would offer a draw. It shows that he didn't enjoy "torturing" anybody, that once the main story of the game had been told, he lost interest in it from an artistic standpoint.

It seems Torre was not really playing chess for the fame. He was rather shy and apparently did not enjoy the trappings of celebrity. As far as I know, he did not have serious plans to be world champion. He was a very humble and good-hearted person. For him, chess was art — not a fight, not an all-consuming competition. Knowing this perhaps



Torre late in life in Mexico, standing beside ruins of Mayan architecture.

The author, Istvan Szabad, with his original copy of Torre's book.

makes it easier to understand how his experience in Europe led him to believe that international competition was "too intense and alienating" for him, and how this led him to retire from chess while still so young.

His spectacular results during his brief career show he really had the talent to be a strong contender for the world championship. His love of the art of chess was a part of that talent, but it was also a weakness when it came to the exhausting competition at the very top levels.

Thus it was that he cut his career short. It was Alekhine, not Torre, who was given the next title match with Capablanca in 1927. The rest is chess history.

In 1977, a year before his death, FIDE granted Torre the grandmaster title.

In 1975 Carlos Torre moved to an old-age home in Merida, where he died three years later on March 19, 1978, at the age of 73, after suffering an edema.

In contrast to the way he was lionized in 1926, Torre in his final years was virtually forgotten by the chess world. He was once the pride of Mexico and America, but he came to a sorrowful end. Another Pride and Sorrow of Chess.

Red River Chess Shootout Trophy Renamed

The 15th Red River Shootout this year will dedicate the name of its traveling trophy to honor Frank Kim Berry.

The annual team tournament between Oklahoma players and North Texas players held in Davis, Oklahoma, was closely supported by FKB, who also often acted as Oklahoma team captain and recruiter.

This year's event is April 29th. See here for more details:
http://rrsochess.net/rrso_home.html#RRSO

RRSO
April 29, 2017
Davis Okla.

THE SIMPSONS
recently had a chess episode, featuring a cameo by Magnus Carlsen. Spoiler Alert: as an actor, Carlsen is a Class E player at best! At least they set up the chessboards correctly. ☺

NEXT MONTH IN OCM…
- RRSO Results
- Plus More Stuff